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THE COMPLAINT OF DEGENERACY EXAMINED.

No. II.

A standard proposed.

HAVING suggested, in the preceding Number, some probable sources of misapprehension relating to this subject, I shall now propose a standard, by which we may judge of the progress or decline of religion and virtue. It is perhaps impossible to fix on any standard, which will correctly apply in every supposable case; yet it may be possible to fix on one, which may be safely adopted, as a *general rule*. The standard now to be proposed is the following:—

The progress or decline of benevolent, humane, and pacific principles.

By these principles the Christian religion is remarkably distinguished from paganism, mahometism, and all the cruel and sanguinary isms or religions, which have ever prevailed among men. Our Savior has taught us, that to love God with all the heart, and all the understanding, and all the strength, is the first commandment of all; that the second commandment is of the

same nature—"thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and that on these two hang all the law and the prophets:—In other words, that these two commandments comprise all that God requires of men—the sum of religion and virtue. The gospel evidently makes that *love which worketh no ill to his neighbor*, the proper evidence of genuine love to God, and to his Son, Jesus Christ. The proper fruits of the spirit, are "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." The "wisdom, which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." "Pure and undefiled religion—is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Such being the nature, the spirit, the principles and the duties of the Christian religion, what can be a more proper standard for judging of the progress or decline of true religion and

virtue, than the progress or decline of benevolent, humane, and pacific principles?

Were we to make the degree of attention to the outward ceremonies of religion the standard, it would lead us to the most false and dangerous conclusions. For nothing is more evident, than that multitudes in different ages, have regarded a scrupulous attention to rites and ceremonies, as the sum of religion, as a substitute for doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God; and as a kind of atonement for the grossest vices and crimes. By such a standard the ancient pagans and the papists of the dark ages, must be preferred to the most enlightened Christians of the present day; and the pharisees of our Savior's time must be preferred to him and his disciples.

The progress or decline of benevolent, humane, and pacific principles, may furnish a standard far less deceptive and dangerous.

But how, it will be asked, are we to judge of the progress or decline of these amiable principles? I answer; by the public laws, institutions, customs and usages, which have been popular, or which have fallen into disrepute in different ages.

The more the benevolent principles of the gospel have their genuine influence in any age, or in any nation, the greater aversion will be excited to laws, institutions and customs of a savage, inhuman and sanguinary character; and the less there is of the influence of Christian principles, the more will sanguinary laws and customs abound,

and the greater will be their popularity.

In every age since our ancestors professedly embraced the Christian religion, there have probably been some enlightened men, who adopted the principles of the gospel, and who felt an abhorrence of such laws and customs as violated these principles. But at some periods, the number, the situation and the influence of such characters, have not been sufficient to give popularity to their principles, or to effect a change in public opinion, so as to abolish the laws and customs which they really abhorred, and for which they mourned.

Besides, it is probably true, and it may yet be made evident from history, that the progress of Christian light among our ancestors was very slow and gradual, even among the most pious and exemplary. It was by degrees that their eyes were opened to see the inconsistency and inhuman character of many laws and customs which they had derived from paganism, and the dark ages of popery. After their eyes were opened, in respect to one such law or custom, they were still advocates for others, equally unjust and abominable.

In proportion as such laws and customs abound among any people, we have evidence of a general depravity in principle and practice, and of a general defect of Christian light and Christian virtue.

It may indeed be true, that a multiplicity of such laws and customs may be popular, while there are many individuals, who are enlightened and pious. Nor

is the prevalence of such laws and customs, evidence that there is not great severity in punishing for some particular vices, and some omissions of supposed religious duties. Nay, such laws and customs are consistent with the prevalence of that kind of love to God, which leads men to injure and destroy one another for "*God's sake*." But whenever and wherever such sanguinary laws and customs have been very numerous and popular, we may safely infer a deplorable want of Christian light and Christian love, in the most influential characters in the community, whether they were rulers, or ministers of religion. For it is impossible that such laws and customs should long retain their popularity against the opinions and combined influ-

ence of the leading characters in a nation.

It indeed appears evident from history, that by education and habit a people may be brought to regard the most inhuman and abominable laws and customs, as sacred, necessary, and useful, and that it requires considerable time and effort to change those opinions, which have been imbibed by education, and confirmed by habit. But it is also evident, that such opinions are not invincible, and that when a large number of the most influential men have their own eyes opened, and are disposed to combine their efforts to open the eyes of others, long established laws and customs may be abolished, to give place to others more congenial to the spirit and principles of the gospel.

ANTHONY BENEZET.

No persons of our race have higher claims to public esteem and admiration than those who have spent their days in humane and benevolent exertions; and nothing more clearly evinces a depravity of taste, than the renown which is given to men, who have employed their talents in mischief, and whose feet have been swift to shed blood. The extravagant eulogies and panegyrics which have been written of men, who had caused the death of millions of their fellow beings, deserve the abhorrence of every virtuous mind. They have a corrupting and deleterious influence, and especially on the minds of young people. But the exhibition of humane and benevolent

characters, has an opposite tendency. The character now to be brought to view, may be admired without danger, and imitated without remorse.

Anthony Benezet was born in France in 1713. His father was a protestant, and left his country to escape persecution. After some stay in Holland he went with his family to England, and settled in London. He gave to his son Anthony a liberal education, and procured him a place with a merchant. But the son, being of a serious character, feared the snares to which he might be exposed in the business of merchandize, and preferred becoming a cooper. This business however he soon found to be too

laborious for his constitution, and he consequently left it, and became a school-master. In this useful employment he spent the greater part of his days.

While he was a young man he came to America, settled in Philadelphia, and joined the society of Friends. He was uncommonly active and industrious in whatever he undertook. "He did every thing," says Dr. Rush, "as if the words of his Savior were perpetually sounding in his ear—*Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" So upright and amiable was he in his manners, so humane and benevolent, so fervent in doing good, that he had not been long in this country, before he attracted the notice, and gained the esteem, of those among whom he lived.

Benezet could not behold the crimes and miseries of the African slave trade without deep regret, and sincere compassion. Its abolition became an object of his pursuit, and in this business he engaged with all his soul. He published several tracts in favor of the emancipation of the blacks, and of civilizing the Indians. One of the pamphlets which he published against the slave trade was entitled "An Historical Account of Guinea, its situation, produce, and the general disposition of its inhabitants; with an inquiry into the rise and progress of the slave trade." Mr. Clarkson says, "This pamphlet became instrumental, beyond any other book ever before published, in disseminating a proper knowledge and detestation of the trade."

Various were the means which

this philanthropist adopted for accomplishing his object. He wrote a letter to the queen of England, and to the queen of Portugal, to persuade them to employ their influence for the abolition of the African trade. His letter to the queen of England was accompanied by the pamphlets he had published. The queen on reading them said—"the author appears to be a *very good man*." Not only did he write pamphlets and letters on the subject, but he made his school subservient to his humane purpose, by communicating knowledge to his scholars, relating to the dreadful commerce, and by exciting in them an abhorrence of the guilty custom. In this way he annually prepared many to aid him, and increased the number of abolitionists.

He seems to have been born and to have lived for this great object. So much was his soul engaged in it, that if any person on a journey called to see him, his first thoughts were, "*How can I make this man an instrument in promoting the glorious cause?*" He would either give him tracts to distribute, or send letters by him, or give him some other commission on the subject. Thus he was daily doing something to open the eyes of people, and to excite their compassion for the poor blacks.

He corresponded with the benevolent Grenville Sharp, Mr. Wesley, Mr. Whitefield, and the Abbe Raynal, all of whom were friendly to his cause. And he wrote to the king of Prussia, to convince him of the unlawfulness of war.

In the time of the American revolution, while the British troops had possession of Philadelphia, Benezet was there; and although he abhorred war, he had a heart to feel for those who suffered by engaging in it. He exerted himself particularly in favor of our soldiers, who were taken captive by the British troops, and brought into the city. "He knew no fear, in the presence of his fellow-men, however dignified they were by titles or station; and such were the propriety and gentleness of his manners, in his intercourse with the gentlemen who commanded the British and German troops, that when he could not obtain his requests, he never failed to secure their civilities, and frequently their esteem."

The mild and faithful intrepidity of Benezet appears in his letter to the British queen. It was written after the revolution, and he reminded her of the terrible events by which the British empire had been shaken, and led her to consider whether the slave trade was not one of the sins which tended to bring down the anger of God upon the nation. The whole letter breathes an amiable and faithful spirit; and it was calculated to make deep and solemn impressions on the mind of the queen.

In addition to his other numerous efforts in favor of the suffering blacks, this good man exerted himself to establish an African school, for the benefit of those in the state to which he belonged. Much of the two last years of his life was devoted to a personal attendance on this institu-

tion. To this he sacrificed the superior emoluments of his other school, as well as his bodily ease. By his last will, he directed that, after the decease of his wife, all his little estate, excepting a few small legacies, should be devoted to support a school for negro children.

It was a saying of Benezet, that "the highest act of charity in the world, is to bear with the unreasonableness of mankind."

This narrative may be closed in the language of Dr. Rush: "Few men since the days of the apostle ever lived a more disinterested life; and yet on his death-bed he said, he wished to live a little longer, *that he might bring down self.*"

"He died May 1784, in the 71st year of his age. His funeral was attended by persons of all religious denominations, and by many hundreds of black people. Col. J—n, who had served in the American army, in returning from his funeral, pronounced an eulogium upon him. It consisted only of the following words:—I WOULD RATHER BE BENEZET IN THAT COFFIN, THAN GEORGE WASHINGTON WITH ALL HIS FAME."

The character of this amiable Christian affords ground for some useful reflections.

First. In the character and conduct of Anthony Benezet, we may see what it is to be a Christian indeed, and how amiable the Christian religion appears when reduced to practice! Like his Lord and Master, he had a heart to weep with those who wept, to feel for the wrongs and miseries of others; and like him, he went

about doing good. That Benezet was free from error we do not assert; but whatever his errors might be, it is evident that they were not of a nature to harden his heart against his fellow-men; nor to lead him to depend on Christ for salvation in such a sense as to neglect to follow the Lord in works of justice, kindness and mercy. To whatever sect such a man may belong, and whatever may be his errors, he is worthy of the esteem of all mankind. In him as well as in Abraham we may see, "how faith wrought with his works," and how "by works faith was made perfect."

Second. In the example of Benezet we may see what it is for Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." The faith "once delivered to the saints," is a "faith which worketh by love." For this faith Benezet *contended earnestly*: Not however by employing *weapons of death* against those for whom the Savior lived and died; nor by employing the no less *carnal weapons* of a slanderous tongue, or a cruel and defamatory pen against his brethren, who happened to dissent from his opinions: but by the display of that temper which the gospel requires, by walking as Christ walked, in meekness, humility and love, by denying himself for the benefit of others, and by doing all he could to relieve the distresses of mankind, to advance their happiness, and to save their souls.

Third. How striking is the contrast between the character of Benezet and that of Alexan-

der the Great, or that indeed of any other military and desolating conqueror. A more undaunted hero has perhaps seldom been seen among men, than Anthony Benezet. But his heroism and courage were displayed in facing dangers and encountering difficulties to *befriend* his fellow-men—to open their eyes, to afford relief to sufferers, and to prevent misery.

How loathsome in the eyes of every humble Christian must be the character of a bloody cut-throat with the title of a military conqueror, when compared with the benevolent Benezet! How fatal has been that delusion which has eulogized the deeds of men, who have been successful in shedding human blood, and in multiplying the miseries of the human family! Let Christians learn, and let children be taught, to withhold the expected tribute of praise from bloody minded men, and to bestow their esteem and gratitude on the real benefactors of mankind. This is one of the most effectual methods for quenching the thirst for military glory, and for drying up the streams of blood and woe.

Fourth. How happy would be the state of a society or a nation composed of such amiable characters as Benezet. Such a society would bear a glorious resemblance to the family of heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

If the rulers of nations should become of the temper and character of Benezet, how obvious it is that the savage custom of deciding controversies by the sword would be banished from the world,

and that oppression and war would cease! But Benezet was not more humane, kind and pacific, than every Christian ought to be—*than every ruler ought to be*. Have we not then reason to mourn, that such blindness exists among Christians, that they can suppose the custom of war to be necessary to the safety of Christian nations; when in fact war is among the greatest of calamities, and nothing more is wanting to prevent its recurrence, than that rulers should display the temper of Christians indeed! Let rulers, who bear the Christian name, conform to Christian precepts, and it will soon be found that war is no more necessary to the safety of nations, than duelling is to the safety of individuals.

Fifth. Let Christian ministers, and Christians in general, engage with the zeal of a Benezet, in an effort to abolish the custom of war, and the rivers of human blood will cease to flow, and the peace of nations will be-

come as durable as their existence. Let every Christian minister, and every influential character, be the instrument of making as many proselytes in favor of the abolition of war, as Benezet did in favor of the abolition of the slave trade, and the nations will soon be employed in beating their swords into ploughshares.

The character of Benezet has been commended, not because he belonged to the society of Friends, but because he was a FRIEND indeed. Those things in him which have been the subject of commendation, certainly should not be of the number of *peculiarities*, by which any sect may be distinguished; they should be common to all who name the name of Christ. It is an honor to the society of Friends, that they have had such men as Benezet of their number; and it will be an honor to Christians of any other denomination to imitate such examples of humanity and benevolence.

ON INTEMPERANCE.

No. 1.

AMONG the unhappy causes, which contribute to private distress and guilt, and to public calamity, intemperance must be allowed to hold a distinguished rank. Unlike the inevitable judgments of heaven, it is to be traced to the folly of man; and, although it is a habit, for the most part, insensibly contracted; yet no excuse can be urged in its defence, which will not justify vice of every kind.

Much has been done to counteract this baneful and odious practice. Of late a society has been organized in our capital for "The suppression of intemperance," and auxiliary associations are multiplying in every direction. This consideration, so far from dispensing with the duty of individual exertions, is a solemn call on every one to use his influence in the cause of reformation.

The writer of this essay indulges not the sanguine hope, that

he shall rival the elegance or the energy, with which intemperance has often been depicted and reprobated. The utmost, to which he aspires, is to keep the attention of his readers fixed upon this tremendous evil, to warn the unwary of their danger, and to excite, as far as possible, the solicitude of all with respect to a vice, fraught with such incalculable miseries.

To this purpose it is unnecessary to give an exaggerated description of its prevalence among us.

This has so frequently been done, as to countenance the opinion of foreigners, that intemperance is more common with us, than in any other nation.

Alas! we need no magnifier to discern or to expose its wretched features! Let any person of observation look around him; and he will behold too many frightful instances of those, who are injuring their health, squandering their time, wasting their substance, and endangering their salvation by intemperance in drinking. Let any clergyman inspect his records of mortality; and he will be surprised to find, what a proportion of deaths have been hastened, if not occasioned by this pestilential vice. Let the judicious physician be consulted, and he will astonish you with enumerating the diseases, which derive from the same source their fatal and untimely influence, if not their entire origin.

We generally agree in considering war a distressing evil. Doubtless the inducements, which it furnishes to intemperance, are not among its smallest calamities.

Let however the comparison be instituted between the loss of lives, occasioned by war and by intemperance. To this purpose, let us select any district of country within our knowledge, and let us make a fair estimate of the number of its inhabitants, who were slain in our seven years' revolutionary contest, and of the number, who, during the same portion of time, have fallen victims to intemperance, at any period since; and the result will probably be different from what would generally be expected.

It is not the wish of the writer inconsiderately to join in the outcry of the great degeneracy of the present compared with former times. In every age, this has been the language of despondent moralists. In some respects, it cannot be doubted, that the present manners and customs are preferable to those of our ancestors. To prove this assertion, we need to instance only in the rights of conscience, and freedom from persecution in matters of religion. But as to the abuse of ardent spirits, it is undeniable, that the advantage is greatly on the side of our forefathers.

This surely needs no labored demonstration. Let the appeal be made to aged persons of observation; and, were not their testimony uniform, the difference in the quantity of distilled liquors, used in former and in latter times, might well be considered incredible.

To arrest this growing evil demands the exertions of every friend of religion, of morality, of

deceency. That he may contribute something toward this laudable end, the writer proposes to consider, in a few subsequent

Numbers, the causes, the evils, the delusive nature, the preventives, and the remedies of this dangerous and pernicious vice.

On the present defects of sacred music, as practised in most of the New England churches, and the best means of removing them.

MR. EDITOR,

ALTHOUGH several of your pages have already been given to strictures on this subject, its copiousness and importance will, it is hoped, be an adequate apology for this communication.

The design of sacred music is undoubtedly to give a deeper impression of sentiment on the mind and the heart, than would be likely to be made by reading. But time, we conceive, has been, when this design, if not overlooked and forgotten, was generally defeated by the use of unsuitable music. Twelve years ago, the greater part of the musical compositions we heard, and that in almost every place, were insipid and unmeaning, if not perverse. For twenty or thirty years preceding, the taste of our country had been sinking in corruption from depth to depth, till it was absolutely greedy of the vilest stuff, impiety or folly was pleased to present.

Every evil, it is said, has a tendency to cure itself. This was verified in the case before us. A few friends of religion and genuine music protested here and there against such an abandonment of one of the best means of devotion; such a profanation of God's house. Through the

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blessing of heaven, their remonstrance had an immediate effect. It brought many to serious reflection, who needed nothing else, to make them ashamed of the taste they had indulged, and grieved for the countenance they had given to one of the greatest perversions. From that time to this, the number of zealous reformers has been gradually increasing, till at length, we hail the prospect of a universal restoration, of those substantial and pathetic kinds of music, which alone can aid our devotions.

In this change of tunes, a great and indispensable point is gained. But, if we limit our views and our zeal to this object, we shall, it is probable, be disappointed in the effects of the reformation. We shall not discover in others, we shall not realize in ourselves, those lively impressions from our musical performances, we anticipate so much. The fact is, we can hardly find a common choir of singers in New England, that are not miserably deficient in their style of performance; while many of their defects are enhanced by the very excellences of the tunes they attempt to perform.

1. A great part of the voices we hear, are like marble, rough from the quarry. It is somewhat

rare to find one, that has received either the *polish* or *form*, without which it is incapable of *harmonizing* with *others*, or giving any *pathos* to its own performance.

2. Another glaring and almost universal defect in our vocal performances, is the want of *pronunciation*. In many societies it would be difficult for one who came in, after this exercise had commenced, to catch a single word from the singers, that would lead him to the particular verse they were performing, though he were directed to the psalm. And how sadly does this neglect defeat the *design* of singing! How *lifeless* and *unmeaning* the performance! It is not enough, that by the help of our books we find out the words, for which the successive notes are designed. Our feelings would not be very much aided by a *reader*, who was too unskilled to utter one half of his letters, and still less by one, who was too lazy and indifferent to do it. As little can we expect from the like *musical* performances.

3. Another capital and extremely common defect in the musical exercises of our churches, consists in neglect of the *characteristic diversities* of music, both in adaptation and performance.

The different effects, we wish to produce by the psalmody of our churches, are, in nature and degrees, more than can be numbered. To this variety there is, it is conceived, a perfect correspondence, in the natural powers or tendencies of music. Every tune, that deserves the name, has something *peculiar* in its essence,

which renders it a fit expression for one sentiment, and *not so fit for any other*, however little it may differ from that. But how little is this infinite diversity in the natural expression of music understood or regarded! How rarely do we observe any nice discrimination in the adaptation of the tune to the words! How commonly are they *wide* from each other, if not in *direct opposition*! And again in the *performance*, how little attention is paid to that *appropriateness* of manner, which nature itself has given to every diversity of sentiment and musical expression! How often, for instance, do we hear that which is designed to *sooth* and *tranquillize* the feelings, sung with the same quantity of voice, and the same modulations, with that, which is intended to produce the *strongest excitements*! How often, but how unnaturally is the sentiment of *resignation* in *sorrow* confounded, in the mode of performance, with *earnest supplication*! How commonly, in a word, do we hear those psalms, which contain the greatest varieties of sentiment, sung in the same manner, from beginning to end! the same quickness, or slowness, loudness or softness, accent and modulation! Of course, how often must the music, though in other respects good, be rather an *incumbrance*, than an aid to our feelings!

4. Another defect in our psalmody, (which however is not peculiar to this country,) is the want of *coincidence* between the *musical* and *rhetorical pauses*, or *divisions of time*, which frequently *obscures* if it does not *pervert* the

sense, and of course prevents the proper effect.

Other defects in the music of most of our churches might be named; but these, when, as frequently happens, they are all united, appear to the writer sufficient to frustrate the design of vocal music.

What then is to be done? Shall we relinquish this part of our public forms? Certainly not. It is unquestionable, that appropriate music, when appropriately performed, has a tendency to aid very much the verbal expression of sentiment. Let us then, with the blessing of God on the means in our power, supply what is wanting, to give the proper effect to this part of our professed worship. But how is this to be done? Some will reply, *let the people be liberal in providing instruction for those, who are principally to perform this service; and let them be more attentive to the qualifications of their teachers.* This indeed would be very good advice; but still it would leave room for several hard questions. How are the people generally to be awakened to the importance of the subject? Who is to do it? Where is a competent number of good instructors to be found? Few seem aware of the number and greatness of our present defects; and most of those few are prevented by their business or professions, from engaging in the instruction of others.

Something however may be done by the few good instructors we have; something by every person of genuine taste, who, within the circle of his intimates, and occasional associates, will ap-

ply himself heartily to the cause; something by publications from the press; and something by the institution of musical societies. All these things are calculated to have a good, but gradual and limited effect. One thing is still wanting, as a basis to the whole; and that is a MUSICAL SEMINARY, in which a correct and thorough education might be rendered more accessible and common.

What a pity, that among all the generous benefactors of Harvard College, who have founded professorships for almost every other branch of literature and science, none have ever thought fit to provide any thing for one of the noblest of sciences, and most pleasing of arts! the very mistress of rhetoric and poetry, and principal handmaid of devotion itself! What a pity, that in all the prosperity of the college, one class after another should come and go, without any other instruction in the principles of music, than they catch at random one from another! How different, in this interesting and important point, would be the state of our churches, were all the sons of Harvard initiated, as far as their capacities would admit, into the theory and practice of this art! Dispersing, as they afterward do, in all directions, and animated, as they generally would be, by an active zeal, they must have a vast influence, especially that part of them, who engage in the sacred profession. Under the smiles of heaven they would every where sow the seeds of an abundant harvest.

Should the present attempt to raise funds for the support of the-

ological students at Harvard College succeed, as we devoutly hope it will, a musical professorship will be of increased importance. An acquaintance with music in

those, who are to preside in the house of God, is to be regarded, as among the highest qualifications, that are not absolutely essential. O. H.

"Substance of the speeches of W. Wilberforce Esq. on the clause in the East India Bill, for promoting the religious instruction and moral improvement of the natives of the British dominions in India, on the 22d of June, 1st and 12th of July, 1813."

UNDER this title, Mr. Wilberforce published the speeches, an abridgement of which, it is thought, will be interesting to the readers of the Christian Disciple. We shall confine ourselves to the views which he exhibits of the Indian character—of the state of religion in India—and of the circumstances which give encouragement to exertion, for the extension of Christianity to that populous and benighted section of the world. We are well aware how much is yet to be done, for the diffusion of the light of the gospel over many parts of our own country: and it is not our purpose to excite sympathy for "the poor Indian," to the neglect of those nearer home, who scarcely less demand our pity for their blindness, and our labors to enlighten and to reform them. But as India has become a sphere of great and increasing missionary labor—as men high in rank and great in influence, have become champions in its cause—and as the Christian world is looking, with deep interest, to the results of the great efforts which are making in its cause, every thing which is authentic of what has been effected, and of its actual

state, cannot fail of obtaining attention, and of being considered important and valuable. Facts on these subjects will speak for themselves; and we give our best thanks to the CHRISTIAN STATESMAN, the ADVOCATE OF HUMANITY, to whom we are indebted for them.

"I beg you to observe," says Mr. Wilberforce, "that the very terms of the resolution expressly state, that '*we are to enlighten and inform the minds of the subjects of our East Indian empire.*' And after much reflection, I do not hesitate to declare, that from enlightening and informing them, in other words, from education and instruction, from the diffusion of knowledge, from the progress of science, and more especially, from all these combined with the circulation of the holy scriptures in the native languages, I ultimately expect even more, than from the direct labors of missionaries. By enlightening the minds of the natives, we should root out their errors, without provoking their prejudices; and it would be impossible, that men of large and instructed minds, could continue to be enslaved by such a monstrous sys-

tem of follies and superstitions, as that under which the natives of Hindostan now groan. They would become Christians, if I may so express myself, without knowing it.

"I had the honor, in 1793, of moving the resolution, of late so often referred to, which declared it to be the duty of the legislature to diffuse among our East Indian fellow-subjects the blessings of useful knowledge and moral improvement. Immense regions, with a population amounting, as we are assured, to sixty millions of souls, have providentially come under our dominion. They are deeply sunk, and by their superstitions fast bound, in the lowest depths of moral and social wretchedness and degradation. Must we not then be prompted by every motive, and urged by every feeling, which can influence the human heart, to endeavor to raise these wretched beings from their present miserable condition; and above all, to communicate to them those blessed truths, which would not only improve their understandings, and elevate their minds, but in ten thousand instances promote their well being, and point out to them a sure path to everlasting happiness!

"But, say our opponents, the natives of Hindostan are so firmly, so unalterably attached to their own religious opinions and practices, however unreasonable they may appear to us, that their conversion is utterly *impracticable*.

"It is indeed true, that their religious system and customs have continued with little alteration, perhaps for thousands of years. But that their attachment to their

own institutions is so fixed, that it cannot be overcome, is not true. It might afford a strong presumption against the absolute invincibility of the *religious* principles and customs of the Hindoos, that great and beneficial reforms have been effected, in various other most important instances, in which their existing systems were, as far as we know, equally dear to them; and which were conceived to be equally unchangeable. But even in these, their religion was more or less implicated. It may be sufficient to specify that mighty change, introduced about twenty years ago, by which the British government granted to all classes of landholders *an hereditary property in their estates; a privilege till then unknown in Asia*; and care was taken to secure to the inferior occupants, no less than to the great chieftains, an indisputable possession of their properties, without any increase of the rents.

"Again, the most important reforms have been introduced into the judicial system; and in the military, even the most confirmed religious principles and habits have, in some particulars, been quietly overcome, and have fallen into disuse, with little or no observation.

"But it is not only where their religion has been directly concerned, that it has appeared their institutions are susceptible of the same changes, which have taken place in every other country; but in many instances, in which religion has been directly in question. How else can we account for that immense number of Mahomedans, estimated at from ten

to fifteen millions, scattered over India, most of whom are supposed, by the best judges, to be converts from the Hindoo faith? And let me remind you of the stern and persecuting spirit of Mahomedanism, and of the increased difficulty which would be thereby occasioned; since it is now an established truth, that persecution counteracts her own purpose, and promotes the prevalence of the religion which she would suppress.

"Again, what shall we say of the whole nation of the Seiks, so numerous, as to be supposed able to raise two hundred thousand horse, who, within a few centuries have forsaken the Hindoo faith, and freed themselves from its burdensome restrictions.

"The followers of Budha also, who reject Caste, are very numerous; and within the pale of the Hindoo faith itself, different sects spring up, from time to time, as in other countries. Mr. Orme says, 'every province has fifty sects of Gentoos, and every sect adheres to different observances.'

"But we have still surer grounds of hope. We have still better reasons for believing, that there is nothing in the nature or the principles of a Hindoo, which renders it impossible for him to become a Christian; for it is notorious, that from the earliest times, there have been many churches of native Christians in India. For the whole of the last century, the work of conversion has been going on with more or less success; and at this moment, there are hundreds of thousands of native Christians in the East Indies.

"If the assertion of our opponents were correct, that the sensibility of the natives of India, in all which regards their religion, is so extremely great, that they can scarcely listen with temper or patience to any arguments which are urged against it, it would naturally follow, that the Christian missionaries, if, even from the dread of punishment, their lives should be safe, would be universally regarded with jealousy and detestation. Whereas, as if on purpose to confute these unreasonable prejudices, *the most zealous, laborious, and successful missionaries, have commonly been, among all classes of the natives, the most esteemed and beloved of all the Europeans.* It has been said, that the ever memorable and revered Swartz was a *politician*; and it has been insinuated, that his popularity among the natives might arise from points in his character, which were less estimable in a religious view. He was a *politician*, but not a volunteer in that service. He became a politician, at the earnest and importunate entreaty of the East India government; because, having to negotiate with Hyder Ally, *they could find no one, in whose integrity and veracity that chieftain would confide, but Swartz the missionary.* He therefore became a politician, and an accredited envoy, because, as a missionary, he had secured to himself the universal confidence, both of Mahomedans, and of Hindoos.

"It is alleged too, that even Swartz's converts were all of the lowest class of the people. But when that excellent man, having read in India a speech of Mr.

Montgomery Campbell, made in the India house the year before, containing all those stale assertions, in disparagement of the missionaries and their followers, which had been so generally circulated; among the rest, this of the low, degraded quality of their converts; he positively contradicted them; and said, if Mr. Campbell had even once attended their church, he would have observed, that more than two thirds were of the higher cast; and that it was so also at Tranquebar, and Vessery. In like manner, Dr. Kerr, who was officially commissioned by the Madras government, in 1806, to visit the Malabar coast, for the express purpose of obtaining every possible information in regard to the establishment, &c. of the Christian religion in that part of the Peninsula, after stating, that the character of the native Christians, whose numbers, according to the best

account, are estimated at from seventy to eighty thousand, is marked by a striking superiority over the heathens in every moral excellence, adds, 'they are respected very highly by the Nairs, (the nobility of the country,) who do not think themselves to be defiled by associating with them; though it is well known that the Nairs are the most particular of all the Hindoos in this respect; and the Rajahs of Travencore and Cochin admit them to rank next to Nairs.'

"I could multiply facts and arguments; but I trust that I have decidedly established, that the notion of its being impracticable to convert the Hindoos is a vain and groundless theory; and that, in maintaining the opposite position, my friends and I stand on the solid and sure ground, of abundant and indisputable experience."

(To be continued.)

THE COMPLAINT OF DEGENERACY EXAMINED

No. III.

Historical facts.

It may now be proper to exhibit such facts as shall be useful in deciding the question, whether the people of the present generation are less pure in principle and practice, than their ancestors were? The greater part of the inhabitants of the United States acknowledge the island of Great Britain as the land of their forefathers' nativity. To

the history of that country then we must look for many of the facts to be related.*

"All ancient writers," says Mr. Hume, "agree in representing the first inhabitants of Britain as a tribe of the Gaul or Celtæ, who peopled the island from the neighboring continent." Like their brethren on the continent they were *pagans*, and like other pagans, they offered *human sacrifices*. The Druids were their

* The facts in this Number, are collected from Hume's History of England and Bigland's View of the World.

priests, and no species of superstition was ever more terrible than theirs.

Julius Cesar invaded Britain 55 years before Christ. The Romans however, did not complete their conquest till the time of Vespasian. About A. D. 450, the Saxons began to invade the island. In the course of 170 years, a large portion of the natives were destroyed, and the Saxons established in the island seven kingdoms, called the Heptarchy.

In the time of the Heptarchy, it was a custom among our ancestors, to reduce captives to slavery, and for poor people to sell their children, and even themselves, as slaves. In A. D. 597, Gregory, bishop of Rome, sent Austin, with forty others, to establish Christianity in Britain among the Anglo-Saxons. "No traces of literature, nor any marks of civilization appear until the introduction of Christianity among them; and," says Mr. Bigland, "it is doubted whether our Saxon ancestors were acquainted with letters, previous to their arrival in the island." Vol. i. p. 102.

In A. D. 827, the seven kingdoms were reduced to one, under Egbert, the grandfather of Alfred. Before Alfred ascended the throne, the Danish invasions commenced, which occasioned the most deplorable calamities in the course of the two following centuries. Speaking of the laws established by Alfred, Mr. Bigland says, "The multiplied scenes of violence and depredation, which had extended to every corner of the country, had given rise to an unexpected and singular species of disorder. The Saxons were

frequently plundered by banditti of their own countrymen, disguised in the habit of Danes; and it was customary among both nations to steal, not only cattle, but also men and women, and to sell them to each other. For this reason a law was enacted which prohibited the sale of cattle or slaves without a voucher. But for the prevention of those, and many other disorders of a similar nature, nothing could be better calculated than the system of general responsibility, which Alfred established. Every householder was answerable, not only for his own family, but also for any stranger who lodged more than two nights in his house. The village or town was answerable for each householder, the hundred for each town or district, and the county for each hundred which it comprised." p. 112.

Other laws of Alfred were designed to limit the custom of private war and revenge, which prevailed at that time. What he did, appears to have had considerable influence in reforming the morals of the nation. It is however pretty evident, that they still remained, in a great degree, a savage people, or that they very soon returned to their savage manners. This may appear by the preamble to laws, passed by his grandson, king Edmund, who began to reign A. D. 941. He states, as a reason for his laws, the "general misery occasioned by the multiplicity of private feuds and battles." And he adopted several expedients to remedy these evils. He ordained, that if any one committed

murder, he might, with the assistance of his kindred, within a year, pay the fine for his crime. The fines were fixed by law according to the rank of the person murdered. Even the king's head had a fixed price, as well as that of a baron, a bishop, or a private citizen.

Gangs of robbers greatly disturbed the peace of the country. The practice of perjury in courts of justice had become so prevalent, that witnesses had to appear with *compurgators*, that is, men who knew nothing about the facts, but who would swear that they believed the witnesses spoke the truth. The practice of judicial combat, was also admitted as a remedy against perjury. A man, who had a cause in court, might, if he pleased, challenge a witness, or even the judge, if he suspected his integrity; and the person challenged was obliged to fight. The successful combatant was supposed to be in the right, and the vanquished person in the wrong; for the combat was regarded as a solemn appeal to God for a decision.

In those days of darkness and barbarity, our ancestors adopted various other modes of determining whether an accused or suspected person was guilty, or not guilty. One was the *decision by the cross*. After an accused person had cleared himself by oath, he then took two pieces of wood, one of which had on it the *sign of the cross*; these he wrapped up together in wool, and placed them on an altar, or on some celebrated relic. Solemn prayer was then made for the success of

the experiment. The priest, or some other person in his stead, took up one of the pieces of wood, and if it happened to be the one marked with the cross, the accused person was pronounced innocent; if otherwise, guilty.

The *ordeal* was another of the barbarous methods adopted at that period. *Boiling water* or *red hot iron* was consecrated by prayers, masses, fastings and exorcisms. The accused person must take up a stone, sunk to a certain depth in the boiling water, or carry the hot iron to a certain distance; his hand was then bound up for three days, and the covering sealed. If, at the end of the three days, his hand appeared to be hurt by the fire, he was thought to be guilty; but if he had received no injury, he was pronounced innocent.

Another method of trial was by *cold water*. The accused person was bound hand and foot, and cast into a river or a pond; in this situation, if he floated, he was deemed guilty, if he sunk, he was declared innocent.

Several other methods were adopted, equally absurd; such as walking blindfold among hot plough shares, and the trial by bread and cheese, consecrated with abundance of ceremonies, and administered with dreadful imprecations.

Let it now be asked, Would not well educated children at this day, of ten years old, readily perceive the folly of such methods of deciding questions of right and wrong, or guilt and innocence? Yet such were the modes and customs of our ancestors, supported by the clergy and the mag-

istrates? Is it a sin to suppose that the people of the present age are more enlightened, and more virtuous, than such ancestors?

In November, A. D. 1002, was the time of the great massacre of the Danish inhabitants of Britain, by the Saxons. On hearing the news, Swein, king of Denmark, vowed revenge. He soon sent an army which spread desolation in England, and finally made a conquest of the country. Canute, a Danish prince, became king of England. The Danes however held the government but about 28 years; it then fell into the hands of Edward the confessor, who was of the Saxon line. In 1066, the Saxon government was again overturned by William, duke of Normandy, who has since been called William the conqueror.

The almost incessant wars in Britain, and the frequent revolutions in the government, had a powerful tendency to render the people ferocious and blood-thirsty. "With regard to the manners of the Anglo Saxons," says Mr. Hume, "we can say little, but that they were in general a rude, uncultivated people; ignorant of letters, unskilled in the mechanic arts, untamed to submission under law and government, addicted to intemperance, riot and disorder. Their best

quality was their military courage, which yet was not supported by discipline or conduct. Their want of fidelity to the prince, or to any trust reposed in them, appears strongly in the history of their later period; and their want of humanity in all their history."

Such were our ancestors generally, but about 750 years ago; and having concisely traced their history from the days of Julius Cesar, to the commencement of the reign of William the conqueror, we must now pause, and request the reader's patience, till he can see the next number of this inquiry. We may however remark, that probably very few readers after this survey, will wish to trace back to an earlier period than the eleventh century, to find a race of ancestors more enlightened, or more virtuous, than the present generation. If it may be truly said of them in general, at that period, that "their best quality was their military courage," they must have been a barbarous race of beings. For so far is military courage from being a *Christian virtue*, that it is more common to the worst of men than to the best; and there is nothing in it more amiable, or more Christlike, than there is in the intrepid ferocity of the tiger.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BENEVOLENCE OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

THE earliest Christians seem to have been bound together by ties, stronger than any before known; and to have exhibited a model of union, affection, faith and zeal, which has justly excit-

ed the admiration of subsequent ages.

It has been the unadvised practice of too many of the advocates for Christianity, to represent in too humiliating a manner, the circumstances of the first converts, to enhance, as they have imagined, the impediments which existed to the first reception of this divine religion. It appears not to be true, either that all the disciples of our Lord, or that all the first converts of his apostles, were men of illiterate minds or indigent circumstances. Had they been all illiterate, the history of our Savior would not have been written with such unaffected simplicity of language, and in some cases, such purity and elegance. And I think it is clear, that some of the earliest followers of our Lord were by no means dependent on the charity of others.

James and John left their *ship* and their *hired servants*, when they began to follow Jesus. Peter had a house at Capernaum, where our Savior sometimes dwelt; and he, with his brother Andrew, said to Jesus, "We have *left all* and followed thee;" which implies, that he and the other apostles, in whose name they spoke, had *something to leave*.

It is said, that John was a relation of Caiaphas, the high priest, and our Savior, when he was on the cross, committed his mother to the care of John, and he took her to his own home. It is hence natural to conclude, that he was able to provide for her.

Matthew was called to be a disciple of Jesus, when sitting at the receipt of custom; that is,

as we should say, in the collector's office. We may well suppose, that this was not entirely unprofitable, as we are told soon afterwards by Luke, that he made a great feast, to which Jesus and his companions were invited, as well as Matthew's acquaintance and his brethren in office. But whatever may be supposed to have been the worldly circumstances of Jesus and his disciples, he did not suffer his little company to *forget the poor*. They had a common stock for these and other purposes; yet to show how little they depended on this for their support, it was committed to the care of Judas, who seems to have been in the habit of purloining from this little treasure of our Savior's beneficence.

If we consider the situation of other followers of Jesus, we find that Mary Magdalene was able to minister to him of her substance; and if we may judge from the quantity of spices, which were prepared by his followers to enbalm his dead body, they could not have been in very indigent circumstances.

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was so profuse in the use of the precious ointment, which she poured on the head of Jesus, just before his death, as to excite the murmurs of bystanders. Joseph of Arimathea, who begged the body of our Lord, was a *rich man*, and Jesus was buried in his sepulchre. And the invitations, which our Savior received to the tables of the rich pharisees, prove that neither he nor his disciples could have been regarded in a contemptible light,

on account of extreme dependence and want.

We find also that after the first effusion of the Spirit, a prodigious number of converts were made, consisting of Jews from all parts of the world, who had come to Jerusalem to worship. The picture we have of them represents them, as united in affection, and profuse in their liberality. So great was their number, that they probably found it necessary to divide into smaller societies for worship and communion. The apostles, we are told, were in the habit of breaking bread from house to house, that is, as I conceive, the different houses where they met for worship. They are described as united together in the purest affection, and animated by the most unbounded generosity. Though in such a number of converts, there must have been men from all ranks of life, yet we are told, that none of them lacked. For as many as were possessors of houses or lands, sold them; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need.

It has been supposed that in this primitive circle of converts at Jerusalem, there was a literal *community of goods*, and that their whole wealth was thrown into a common stock, and placed at the disposal of the apostles; and that this was not a mere voluntary act, but expected as a thing of course from all the converts on their professing Christianity. If this were the fact,

it is a little extraordinary, that this state of things did not longer continue—that we have no traces of it in the subsequent history, and that it was not imitated in some of the other churches, which the apostles afterwards planted. But there are some circumstances in this very history of the Acts, which may lead us perhaps to a different conclusion.

That this community of goods was merely the result of spontaneous and ardent generosity, and not of any law of the society founded by the apostles, is, I think, to be clearly inferred from the story of Ananias. He was one of the new converts, and agreeably to the prevailing example had sold his possessions; but instead of faithfully acknowledging the amount of the money, which he had received, he attempted to deceive the apostles, and to keep back part of the price; and by offering a part for the whole, he hoped to retain his standing as a member of the society of Christians, and to be maintained out of the common stock. The consequence of this prevarication, which is called lying to the Holy Spirit, is well known. The language of Peter on this occasion is worthy of remark—Why hath satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Spirit, to keep back part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, was it not thy own? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. That is, you have attempted to deceive the Spirit,

with which we are miraculously endowed. This extraordinary story, I think, proves there was no law binding the early converts to give up their estates to the public service, and that Ananias, under the pretence of generosity, had indulged a fraudulent, vain, and perhaps covetous design. His crime was not sacrilege, as some have supposed; he had made no vow to throw his possessions into a common stock, or, in other words, to devote them to God; but it was gross hypocrisy and prevarication. It was a pretence, that he had bestowed upon the church the whole price of his land, when he was conscious that he had detained a part of it. It appears, I think, that the severity of this early miracle was necessary in the infant state of Christianity; to prevent any persons from joining the new community from sinister views and worldly purposes, with the hope of obtaining a share of the distributions, which were made. It is said to have struck terror into them all; it must have satisfied them that all fraud might be instantly detected; that none but the sincere and upright should dare to profess themselves converts to a cause, which appeared to be under the immediate protection of the Searcher of hearts. And it also illustrates in the most singular manner the pure, unaided propagation and success of Christianity, from conviction unfeigned and motives uncorrupted.

But it may be replied—is it not said that the first converts had all things in common? Yes—but it would seem that this ex-

pression ought to be explained by other clauses. They had all things in common. Why? not because they were under any moral or positive obligation to relinquish their estates; but because “the multitude of them who believed were of one heart and one soul.” Neither was there any among them that lacked. Why? because they did not consider that aught of the things which they possessed, was their own. They were animated with a fervor of generosity, and a strong faith in that religion which taught them to look to another world for their recompense. They felt what they had never felt before, that there were ties stronger than those of interest or of consanguinity; in short, they gave an early and a most illustrious example of the disinterested spirit of Christianity. The poor, whom they had before disregarded and despised, they now considered as heirs of the same hopes with themselves; brethren of the same generous Master, and entitled to all the relief and consolation which their rich fellow Christians could give them.

This spirit continued in an eminent degree in the Christian church. The history of the Acts and Paul’s Epistles, furnish many other instances of the characters of the first Christian communities. The whole world seemed to them but one family, and this primitive church of Jesus, which had set the example of Christian generosity, was afterwards indebted to the distant churches for relief, when they themselves were suffering under calamity. From distant provin-

ces of Macedonia and Achaia contributions were sent to the poor saints at Jerusalem; and Paul seems to have been delighted with being engaged in this charitable service, and commends his distant converts for their readiness. Consider now that this generosity was shown from Gentiles towards Jews, whom before the introduction of Christianity, the Jews thought unworthy of any thing but hell; whom they thought it a pollution to converse with; it was shown too at a time when controversies existed in the Christian community, about some points of ceremony between Jew and Gentile, which, though to

us they now appear trivial, seemed to the early converts of everlasting consequence. Yet notwithstanding these schisms and occasional jealousies, they did not forget the great duty of charity: this surely was a new phenomenon in the world. Perhaps it cannot be shown in the whole history of paganism, before the introduction of the gospel, that a number of poor societies or individuals in Greece or Italy, were interested in the distresses of a community at Jerusalem, and much less that they ever thought of contributing a sum for the relief of the distressed in such a distant and despised country.

B.

(To be continued.)

ALFRED AND SIGBERT.

THE following dialogue has been extracted from Cottle's *Alfred*, a Poem, founded on the character of Alfred, and the events of his reign. Sigbert was a papal clergyman, whose friends had been killed by the Danes. He laid aside the character of the *minister of peace*, and assumed that of the *warrior*, to revenge the wrongs he had received. The dialogue commences in a council of war, and embraces the substance of several distinct interviews.

Sigbert. ————— My heart doth pant
To seek the Danish army! Let us haste
And Hubba meet, that chieftain, at whose name
The babe upon its mother's breast turns pale,
Feeling instinctive terror. Let us count
The moments till the fight, and when it comes
Call to our standard, HAVOC! bid each flower,
And herb, and lofty tree, all nurture scorn
But Danish blood.

Alfred. Pardon me, Sigbert! I am one who loves
The heart that meditates on truth, the tongue
That dares declare it. Much I prize thy worth,
Thy many services, and still I trust
To make thee recompense; yet must I name
The thing dislik'd, though in my dearest friend.
Thy soul is fill'd with hatred, and blind wrath—
The *Christian never hates!* We are taught
By heaven's unerring law, to pity those

We cannot love—e'en our worst enemies.
 Sigbert, thy mind is poison'd, thou dost thirst
 With most foul appetite for Danish blood—
 Not for the good it yields thee, but, to please
 Thy rooted hatred, and uncurb'd revenge.
 Thy wrongs are great! My wrongs are manifold;
 But let us not exclude that holy light—
 Truth, from our minds. Have not the Danes some wrongs
 To vex their spirits? Was it not a Prince
 Of Britain, that, with dastard cruelty,
 Murder'd the Danish king?—The very sire
 Of these our fierce invaders!

The Danes are men
 And though they scorn the suppliant's cry, our faith
 Hath taught us better.—

What I now declare,
 Springs not from sudden anger, but is learn'd
 From reason, and that sacred book, whose page
 Infallible, all should alike obey.
 Sigbert, with me *thou shalt not wage the war!*
 Thou hast profess'd thyself, singled of heaven,
 To bear glad tidings and good will to men!
 How cam'st thou by that garb? A calling thine
 When in faith chosen, and with zeal fulfill'd—
 Most dignified, and first of human kind!
 Sigbert, *henceforth respect thy character!*

Sigbert.

O king!

Dost thou indeed declare that I must leave
 My sword and my good armor, shun the fight
 And never from this moment more rejoice
 O'er vanquished Dane?

Monarch, thy words are just!
 They well accord with something at my heart—
 That inward monitor, which in the hour
 Of thought and meditation, well approves
 Thy doctrine! But my all! each friend I loved,
 Those Danes have spoil'd me of! and shall I crouch
 In low, base cowardice, and court the foe
 To murder unresisted?—See the Danes,
 Thick as the solar ray, scatter around,
 All plagues, yet sheathe my sword! My very soul
 Revolts at these thy words! I cannot check
 This loathing of all mercy! I must live,
 In fix'd and unextinguishable hate.
 Screen not a soul! Laugh at their dying yells!
 And when with shrinking heart they look for death,
 Spare them with *savage mercy* to endure
 New torture, and unheard of agonies!

Alfred.

Thou knowest not what spirit thou art of.
 Thy many wrongs have so disturbed thy thoughts,
 So warm'd thy faculties, that thou dost see
 Plain things confused. Sigbert, before thee lie
 Two paths; declare thy choice, for they are both
 Opposed, distinct, and incompatible!—
 Be thou the man of God, resign the thought
 Avenging, and put on that ornament,

A meek and quiet spirit; shew thyself
 Prepared to teach, by having first been taught;
 Or else renounce thy sacred character!
 Throw off the hypocrite! confess thyself
 The slave of hate, and all the passions fierce,
 Which nature groans beneath; then wield thy sword,
 Not for the end, but for the thirst of blood,
 Unqualified thy heart doth doat upon!
 This thou may'st do, *but know the recompense!*
 It is the scorn of men, the curse of God!
 In me it is most meet thus to declare,
 For heaven hath rais'd me up, howe'er unfit,
 To govern this his people, and to see
 His teachers pure; and never will I view
 The ministers of peace—clad in this garb.
Discard the priesthood! or renounce the sword!

Sigbert. With deep conviction do thy words come here!
 I cannot wield the sword, and still retain
 The spirit heaven approves; yet do I feel
 Hatred so deeply fix'd, and in my heart
 Such cravings, not to be subdued by words,
 That I must grasp the sword! I *must* alone
 Live to consume the Dane!

Alfred. I hear thy resolution! I have well
 Discharged my conscience.

After this Sigbert killed a Dane, who begged for mercy, and then appeared again in the presence of the king.

Alfred. Sigbert! whither hast thou been. What of the two Danes?
 Thy sword is bloody! I conjure thee, say,
 Whence came it? Stand not thus insensible!

Sigbert. I cannot lie, oh king!—
 But I do fear to tell thee;—I have slain
 The flying foe.—

Alfred. Slain him!
 Did I not warn thee with a monarch's voice
 To spare him, and conduct him to our sight?
 Whence came the deed?

Sigbert. One Dane
 These eyes beheld not, but, retiring fast;
 I saw the other, and o'ertaking cried,—
Dane! as thou valu'st life, yield me thy sword!
 He stopped and drew, we fought; I vanquished him.

Alfred. —When vanquished had he not
 Strength to reach our presence? Answer these my words!

Sigbert. It must be told!—then know, oh king! the Dane
 Pleaded for life,—but mine ear
 Scorn'd his petition. Him I thus address'd:—
 Thou reptile! villain black! thou imp of hell!
 If angels from their silver clouds look'd down
 And shouted, *spare him!* with a voice of thunder,
 I would disdain them all; for ere thou breath'st
 A second time, thy venom'd blood shall flow!
 So saying, I the demon slew.

Alfred. What do I hear? Didst thou disdain a foe
That asked for mercy?

Sigbert. I did, for thinking of the wrongs,
Many and deep, this head had borne, I said,
When tigers spare their prey, then, not till then,
Will I spare thee; and instant through his heart
Plung'd this my sword.

Alfred. Thou art no friend of mine!
I now disown thee! Never from this hour
Approach thy king, but let the murderer's scorn
Light on thee, and reward this evil deed!

(To be concluded in the next.)

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM GILBERT WEST ESQ. TO DR. DODD-
DRIDGE.

March 14, 1747.

I AM glad to find that Christianity begins to be so well understood, and taught by so many men of parts and learning in all sects; the fruits of which appear in a candor and charity unknown to all the ages of the church, except the primitive, I had almost said the apostolic age. Does not this give you a prospect of the completion of the famous prophecy, that speaks of the lion and the lamb lying down together in the kingdom of the Messiah. Lions there have been, hitherto, in all churches; but too many, fierce, greedy, and blood-thirsty lions, though often disguised like lambs: and some lambs there have been simple enough to think it expedient for the flock to assume the habits and terrors of lions. But I hope they now begin to undeceive themselves, and to consider Christianity as intending to bring back the world to that state of innocence which it enjoyed before the fall, when in one and

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the same paradise, to use the words of Milton,

Frisking play'd
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and
of all chase,
In wood or wilderness, forest or den:
Sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his
paw
Dandled the kid.

To attain this happy state, all Christians should unite their endeavors; and instead of looking out for and insisting upon points of difference and distinction, seek for those only in which they do or may agree. They may at least sow the seeds of peace and unity, though they should not live to reap the fruits of it in this world.

Blessed are the peace-makers, says the Prince of peace, for they shall be called the children of God; an appellation infinitely more honourable than that of pastor, bishop, arch-bishop, patriarch, cardinal or pope, and attended with a recompense infinitely surpassing the richest

revenues of the highest ecclesiastical dignity. That you and all sincere Christians may deserve this character, and attain its reward, is the sincere and

heartly wish of, sir, your most affectionate humble servant.

N. B. Gilbert West Esq. appears to have been of the Church of England.
J. K.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY.

To the members of the several Bible Societies in the United States.

Brethren,

It is with peculiar pleasure that I once more address you on the interesting subject of extending the Redeemer's kingdom by means of the unlimited and gratuitous circulation of the holy scriptures.

From the most correct information that has lately been received, it has become evident that the demand for Bibles in the remote and frontier settlements of our country, is far beyond the resources of the several bible societies now existing in the United States.

An institution, founded on a more extended plan, that will concentrate and direct the efforts of our numerous and increasing Bible Associations, seems at present to be the general wish of the friends of revealed truth. Such an institution has a powerful claim to the liberal support of the Christian public. This plan, which originated with the New Jersey Bible Society, has within the last year engaged the attention of the Board of Managers of the New York Bible Society.

The resolutions, inserted below, contain the result of their deliberations on this important subject. A brighter day appears now to have dawned on our western hemisphere.

That the present effort may be rendered an efficient means of salvation to many thousands of destitute poor in our own, and more distant lands, should be the wish and prayer of every sincere Christian.

And may the blessing of him who is "able to do for us abundantly more than we can either ask or think," give it complete success—"unto whom be glory in the church, by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages—world without end."

Resolutions of the Board of Managers of the New York Bible Society.

1st. *Resolved*, That it is highly desirable to obtain, upon as large a scale as possible, a cooperation of the efforts of the Christian community throughout the United States, for the efficient distribution of the holy scriptures.

2d. That as a mean for the attainment of this end, it will be expedient to have a convention of delegates from such Bible Societies, as shall be disposed to concur in this measure, to meet at _____ on the _____ day of _____ next, for the purpose of considering whether such a cooperation may be effected in a better manner, than by the correspondence of the different societies as now established; and if so, that they prepare the draft of a plan for such cooperation to be submitted to the different societies for their decision.

3d. That the Secretary transmit the above resolutions to the President of the New Jersey Bible Society, as expressive of the opinion of this Board on the measures therein contained, and at the same time signifying the wish of this Board, that he would exercise his own discretion in bringing the subject before the public.

In pursuance of the foregoing resolutions requesting me to designate the

time and place at which the proposed meeting of delegates from the different Bible Societies in the United States shall take place; after mature deliberation, and consulting with judicious friends on this important subject, I am decidedly of opinion that the most suitable place for the proposed meeting, is the city of New York—and the most convenient time the second Wednesday of May next—and I do appoint and recommend the said meeting to be held at that time and place.

Should it please a merciful God to raise me from the bed of sickness,

to which I am now confined, it will afford me the highest satisfaction to attend at that time, and contribute all in my power toward the establishment and organization of a society, which, with the blessing of God, I have not the least doubt will in time, in point of usefulness, be second only to the parent institution (the British and Foreign Bible Society)—will shed an unfading lustre on our Christian community, and will prove a blessing to our country and the world.

ELIAS BOUDINOT,

Pres. of N. Y. Bib. Soc.
Burlington, Jan. 31, 1816.

Extracts from the correspondence of the British and Foreign Bible Society, since the publication of the Eleventh Report.

EUROPE.

Letter of thanks from Mr. Ion Vidalin, sheriff of South Mule Syssel, in Iceland, in the name of the inhabitants of that district, for the copies of the Icelandic Scriptures sent thither in the summer of 1814. (Translation)*

THAT religion is the fundamental pillar of the state, on which the real welfare of the whole body politic, and of every private citizen, must rest, is a truth which has been acknowledged by the ablest politicians in all ages of the world. To be sensible of the value of true and genuine religion; to venerate its pure and primitive principles; and to endeavor to make all men acquainted with them, must always diffuse among mankind, light, life, and happiness; must promote the true dignity of man, the noblest use of life, and employments, which may be appreciated in time, but can be rewarded only in eternity. Among these employments is to be reckoned the vigorous prosecution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the sole object of which is to promote the circulation of the Holy Scriptures among all nations; whose worthy interpreter and

representative, the Rev. E. Henderson, has brought over to us, poor Icelanders, the fruits of its noble exertions in a new and useful edition of the fundamental books of our religion, the most Sacred Bible, and New Testament of our Savior Jesus Christ, in our vernacular language. Of these books a considerable number has been sent over by the ships of last season, proving a rich supply amidst the great scarcity which was previously becoming more and more afflictive; and the copies have already been distributed with great pains, owing to the zeal and diligence of the Rev. E. Henderson, the interpreter of the noble Society. As a proof of his zeal for the illumination of mankind, he has also visited the eastern coasts of Iceland, and favored us with a personal visit in South Mule Syssel.

Therefore, in the name, and on the behalf, of all the inhabitants of the aforementioned Syssel, under my jurisdiction, I, the undersigned, return my respectful and warmest thanks to the noble British and Foreign Bible Society, and its representative, the Rev. E. Henderson, for their mutual exertions to promote our illumination; and all

* Officially communicated through the Hon. Conferenceraad Thorarinson, Deputy Governor of the northern and eastern quarters of the Island, and his Lordship Bishop Vidalin.

we, the inhabitants of South Mulè Syssel, do express our most cordial wishes, that heaven would regard, and eternity remunerate, the benevolent exertions of the honored Society. And may our dear friend, the Rev. E. Henderson, be abundantly blessed! May his exertions prosper and be acknowledged by the present, and by every future generation; and may his labors be crowned in eternity!

On behalf of the whole population of South Mulè Syssel, I have the honor to be, most respectfully,

ION VIDALIN,

The constituted sheriff of
South Mulè Syssel in Iceland.

Eskefjord in Iceland,

Dec. 31, 1814.

From the Third Report of the Finnish Bible Society. Abo, March 28, 1815.

Through the goodness of Divine Providence, and under a Christian Sovereign's mild government, the Finnish Bible Society has arrived at the conclusion of another year, during which, in the progress of its well-meant endeavors for diffusing a more general knowledge of the Holy Scriptures among the inhabitants of Finland, it has had reason to entertain the consolatory hope, *that the Father of lights, who has begun so good a work among us, will perfect it till the day of Christ.*

And although it is much to be wished that the Society could have attained the object of the institution sooner, and engaged more actively in the work of distributing the word of God than has hitherto been possible; the Committee are nevertheless convinced that the short Report now presented to the public, will prove satisfactory to all the members of the Society, and confirm them in the joyful assurance, *that the Lord is with us, and that his blessing rests upon the work of our hands.*

The Society's principal endeavor has hitherto been to complete the octavo edition of the Finnish Bible on standing types. It is with peculiar pleasure that the Committee can state

that, in consequence of the very great liberality of his Imperial Majesty and the British and Foreign Bible Society, as also the voluntary subscriptions of all classes of their fellow subjects, there is every reason to believe, that the funds of the Society are already equal to the expenses of this edition. The New Testament is already printed off, first in St. Petersburg, and now here in Abo; 24 sheets of the Old Testament are composed, and partly printed off, in St. Petersburg.

In the Report for the last year it was observed, that beside the 750*l.* which the British and Foreign Bible Society had presented to the Society in Finland, for printing the Finnish Bibles on standing types, they had most generously presented them with 200*l.* for distributing Swedish Bibles among the Swedish inhabitants of Finland. With this money, 1350 Bibles have been procured from Stockholm, of which 250 copies have been distributed gratis, and the remainder have mostly been sold at cost prices. The money received for these Bibles is designed as a separate fund for the purpose of procuring a fresh supply, as needed, for this class of our fellow subjects.*

The Rev. J. Paterson, who forwarded the above communication, adds:

"From the above Report it appears, that our Finnish friends are very active; and, considering the poverty of the country, they have come forward with great liberality. The subscriptions amount to three times the sum any of us expected. No part of the Report affords me more pleasure than that concerning the Swedish Bibles. Never were 200*l.* better employed by your Society. They have made a good use of the talent you entrusted them with. It has awakened a desire in the people to have the Scriptures in their own, the Swedish language; and, poor as they are, they cheerfully pay for them; so that I hope, ere long, every Swedish family in Finland will, by means of this small fund, be furnished with a copy of the Bible.

* Since the Report was drawn up, 600 additional copies have been ordered from different parts of Finland.

"We have begun the distribution of the Finnish Testament in the Government of St. Petersburg. I expected the edition would have lasted us for several years; but the demand is so great, that we cannot get the Testaments bound quickly enough, and the whole edition is already nearly exhausted. When a quantity arrives in a village, all the inhabitants assemble, and can scarcely be restrained from carrying off the Testaments by force. They have been famishing for want of the word of life, and now they are almost insatiable.

"We have recently received 300 rubles, which have been subscribed by the Ingermanland Russian Regiment, besides 130 rubles from their Colonel, for which they require one Russian and one Polish Bible. This gift is peculiarly valuable, as coming from Russian soldiers. The Roman Catholic Metropolitan has published two pastoral letters to his flock, recommending the reading of the Scriptures among them generally, and ordering the Clergy to promote the circulation of the Society's editions. This is an important document. Our Committee ordered it to be published in the Gazettes, that it might be as generally known as possible. A copy of it will be sent you by our friend Pinkerton, as soon as he can get it translated for you. I hope it will have its effect on the Roman Catholics with you, and in Germany. We have also received from his Imperial Majesty freedom to send all letters and packages free of expense, by post, so that we can now send our Bibles to the remotest parts of the Russian Empire with the greatest facility."

From the Rev. R. Pinkerton. St. Petersburg, June, 5, 1815.

I think I have mentioned in former letters, that the Bishop of Samogitia had translated the New Testament into that language, that the manuscript was sent hither last year, and received the approbation of his Eminence Sesterinsevitich, the Catholic Metropolitan, and that the Rt. Rev. Translator

had resolved to print 1000 copies of it in Wilna, at his own expense. After our Committee had corresponded with the Bishop in regard to the state of the Samogitians,* who were brought over to the Christian religion only in the 15th century, and have never yet had a version of the Scriptures in their language, it was this day resolved to print an additional 4000 copies, at the expense of the Russian Bible Society.

Among the multitude of interesting communications and liberal subscriptions laid before the Committee this day, from different distant parts of Russia, none afforded us so much pleasure as the following most interesting observations, respecting the establishment of an Auxiliary Bible Society in the seaport town of Theodosia, in the Crimea. The communication was written by the Governor of that city, his Excellency Bronefsky, and is accompanied with a list of from 30 to 40 subscribers, of whom *six* are subjects of the Sultan of Constantinople, and a petition for instructions towards the establishment of a Branch of the Bible Society in that ancient city, formerly called by the Turks Kafa.

"The Theodosian Auxiliary Branch, having implored the blessing of the Most High, will use all possible exertions to promote the object of the Russian Bible Society. The dissemination of the word of God among Christians alone, composes of itself an important part of this Society's undertaking—an undertaking which requires unwearied efforts, and liberal contributions, on the part of its members.

"As the town of Theodosia is inhabited chiefly by foreigners of different religious persuasions, it will be necessary to inform them, that the spirit and rules of the Russian Bible Society do not prevent it from sending the Holy Scriptures to their friends beyond the borders of Russia. The Bible Society has limited the object of its undertaking to the distribution of the Holy Scriptures in different languages, *without note or comment*. The object, in its simplicity, is exalted, and worthy of the spirit of the Gospel.

* The British and Foreign Bible Society has granted to the Russian Bible Society 250*l.* in aid of printing and circulating the Samogitian Scriptures.

"The Theodosian Branch Bible Society will strive to distribute the word of God among unbelievers, having before it a vast field, first in the Peninsula of the Crimea, and secondly in the neighboring countries of Caucasus and Anatolia, for making known the gospel to nations who still remain in heathen or Mohammedan darkness. But without exactly fixing the extent of the sphere of its operations, it is easy to observe, that it will comprehend particularly the countries lying on the shores of the Black Sea. Abhazia, Mingrellia, and Anatolia, being in the closest commercial connexion with Theodosia, present a wide field for the Bible Society proposed to be in that city.

"It is well known that in former times the Abhazi were enlightened by the faith of Christ, and belonged to the Greek communion, possessed their own Bishops, and were reckoned to the *Eparché* of Alanie, the seat of which see was Theodosia, and afterwards Phanagoria. After the fall of the Greek Empire, however, the nation of the Abhazi, like the Circassians, being deprived of preachers, and not possessing a written language, returned to their heathenish customs, and at length many of them embraced the Mohammedan religion. Monuments of Christianity exist to the present time among them, in the remains of churches, for which the people have still respect. Another proof of this, is the veneration which they have for the form of the cross.

"The inhabitants of Mingrellia have been more fortunate than their neighbors the Abhazi. They have preserved the faith of their fathers in the midst of the heavy yoke of bondage, which

has lain upon their country for several centuries; and, notwithstanding the persecutions of cruel Mohammedans, they still continue to hold the Christian faith according to the Greek confession, and perform their religious services in the Georgian language.

"At length the coast of Anatolia presents itself to view, extensive, and well peopled, mostly, by Greeks and Armenians, who compose the laboring, or what is there styled, the *black* part of the community. The lot of these Christians, yet our brethren, sunk in ignorance and poverty, under the iron rod of Turkish dominion, surely merits our compassion. Poverty, produced by oppression, has deeply rooted ignorance among them, and this has at length begotten indifference to the knowledge of the word of God. These poor people are reduced so far, that they have forgotten their native tongues, and now pray to God in the Turkish language.

"The Theodosian Branch Society will take upon itself the sacred obligations of promoting these views, having numerous facilities by the central commercial intercourse which the Port of Theodosia has with Abhazi, Mingrellia, and Anatolia. From these short remarks, it is easy to observe, how important and extensive the field is, which presents itself to the zeal and activity of the members of the Theodosian Auxiliary Bible Society. Success and further extended views depend upon God. He, by his omnipotent goodness, will direct all for the best, and will make even impossibilities possible to contrite spirits, that hunger after his righteousness.

Theodosia, April 3, 1815."

Revival of religion in Salisbury, N. H.

A most pleasing revival of religion has lately taken place in the Congregational Society in Salisbury, N. H. The work has been remarkably free from noise, enthusiastic zeal and disorder of every kind. The spirit of truth, attending the word, preached with a constant regard to the simplici-

ty of divine testimony, and operating as "a still small voice," has, in a judgment of charity, brought many souls to the feet of Jesus, where they remain filled with love, clothed with humility, and adorned with a meek and quiet spirit. By an acquaintance with such disciples of our Lord, any one,

who had never seen the Bible, would hardly fail of seeing, that "the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and that "the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Within a little more than a year, seventy persons have been added to the church. And more than ever before, we "behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." It is thought worthy of remark, that belonging to four houses in the society, there are no less than twenty-six professors of godliness, all of whom were in infancy, or in childhood, favored with parental and baptismal dedication to the Lord; and that there are now in the church about fifty young and unmarried persons. A number very lately give evidence of repentance unto salvation, who have not yet made a public profession; others are under very serious impressions, and we trust the good work is still progressing. Not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, be all the glory. It has been indeed "a revival of love."

T. W.

Salisbury, Jan. 1816.

Missionary Box.

An American privateer during the late war having captured in the Irish channel a sloop from Cardigan laden with coal, the captain went on board to survey his prize. Observing a small box with an aperture in the lid, and an inscription on it, *missionary box*, he enquired what it was. The Welshman, apprehending the destruction of his vessel and property (according to the recent practice of the Americans to burn their prizes) replied with a sigh, "Ah! it's all over now! You must know, that I and my poor fellows have been accustomed to drop a penny piece into that box every Sunday morning, to help in sending out missionaries to preach the gospel." "Indeed," said the American, "that's a good thing, a good thing, indeed." After a short pause, he held out his hand to the master of the sloop, and said, "I will not touch a

hair of your heads, nor injure your vessel;" and immediately departed, leaving the astonished and grateful Welshman, to pursue his course unmolested.

Mortality in Virginia.

Norfolk, Feb. 5, 1816. We are assured, that the mortality among the inhabitants of the adjoining counties has, for the two last months, even exceeded the ravages of the fatal epidemic in the winter of 1814 and 1815. That portion of Nansemond county, which lies eastward of the river, and the lower precinct of Princess Anne county, are computed to have lost more than half the population they contained last summer;—and the deaths in the parish of St. Brides in Norfolk county have been awfully great. In other parts of those counties much sickness has been experienced, and many deaths have taken place, but bearing no proportion to the former. *Herald.*

Massachusetts Peace Society.

In the last Number encouragement was given that this Number should contain a list of the officers of the Massachusetts Peace Society. The Executive Committee has not yet been elected. The following is a list of all the present officers of the Society:—

His Honor Wm. Phillips, <i>President.</i>	
Hon. Thomas Dawes, <i>Vice President.</i>	
Dea. Elisha Ticknor, <i>Treasurer.</i>	
Mr. Thomas Wallcut, <i>Rec. Sec.</i>	
Rev. Noah Worcester, <i>Corres. Sec.</i>	
Rev. John Foster D. D.	} <i>Trustees.</i>
Rev. Abiel Holmes D. D.	
Professor L. Hedge,	
Rev. Daniel Sharp,	
John Kenrick Esq.	
William Wells Esq.	} <i>Counsellors of the Cor. Sec'y.</i>
Rev. John Foster D. D.	
Rev. Jonathan Homer,	
Rev. Henry Ware D. D.	
Rev. Joseph M'Kean LL. D.	
Rev. William E. Channing,	

Installations.

On Wednesday, Feb. 21, the Rev. David Batcheller was installed over the Congregational Church and Soci-

ety in Oxford—The Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Lane of Sturbridge; Sermon by Rev. Mr. Whipple of Charlton, from Matt. v. 16; Installing Prayer by Rev. Mr. Mills of Sutton; the Charge by Rev. Mr. Goffe of Milbury; the Right-Hand of Fellowship by Rev. Mr. Pond of Ward; and Concluding Prayer by Rev. Mr. Williams of Dudley.

In Cape Elizabeth, Maine, Rev. William Gregg.

Nov. 27, 1815, by the Presbytery of Geneva, the Rev. Ebenezer Fitch D. D. late president of Williamstown College, pastor of the Congregation of W. Bloomfield, N. Y. On the 17th of Jan. 1816, the same presbytery installed Rev. Comfort Williams, pastor of the Congregation of Gates, in the village of Rochester, N. Y. On the 31st a committee of the presbytery of Geneva installed Rev. William Clark, pastor of the congregation at Wolcott.

Obituary.

Died in Plainfield, Conn. 13th of Feb. Rev. Joel Benedict, D. D. aged 72, pastor of the congregational church in that town.

In Huntington, Conn. 16th of Feb. Rev. David Ely D. D. aged 66, and in the 43d of his ministry.

In Barrington, Rev. Samuel Watson, aged 43, for 18 years pastor of the Congregational Church in that town.—In Philadelphia, Arthur Howell, aged 63, a minister of the Society of Friends.—In Monteville, Conn. Hon. William Hillhouse, aged 88. He was in the Conn. Legislature more than 50 years in succession.—In Seabrook, N. H. Comfort Collins, aged one hundred and five years and three months. She was for many years a minister in the Society of Friends.—In Rehoboth, Hon. Stephen Bullock, aged 80.—In Charlestown, Mr. Giles Alexander, aged 65.

Confidence in God.

DELIGHTFUL thought! my God is nigh,
My Father and my Friend;
He knows the sorrows I endure
And will deliverance send.

Though he afflicts to try his saints,
Corrects when they have need;
Yet he displays a father's heart,
He pities while they bleed.

I bow, my God, before thy throne,
I own thy rod is just,
Make me to know thy promised grace,
In thee is all my trust.

Then will I speak before the world,
Thy wondrous love proclaim,
I'll urge transgressors to reform,
And saints to praise thy name.

R.

On cruelty to Beasts.

A MAN of kindness, to his beast is kind,
But brutal actions show a brutal mind;
Remember, he who made thee, made the brute,
Who gave thee speech and reason, formed him mute.
He can't complain—but God's all seeing eye
Beholds thy cruelty, and hears his cry;
He was design'd thy servant and thy drudge;
But know that his Creator is thy JUDGE. *Amer. Mag.*

Candidates for the ministry in Cambridge and its vicinity.

Mr. Ed. W. Andrews, Newburyport.
Mr. Francis Jackson, Cambridge.
Mr. David Reed, do.
Mr. Joseph Allen, do.
Mr. Jonathan P. Dabney, do.
Mr. Samuel Gilman, do.

Mr. Thomas Prentiss, Cambridge.
Mr. Hiram Weston, Duxbury.
Mr. Samuel Clarke, Cambridge.
Mr. Henry Ware, jun. do.
Mr. Rufus Hurlbut, do.